



City of Seattle
Seattle Parks and Recreation

Date: December 6, 2011

Dear Community Member,

We heard a lot from the hundreds of you who came out to our 27 October and November public meetings to talk about how to move forward with our community center operations, and a lot of what we heard was great ideas. Thanks for coming to your community center's meeting.

For the northwest geographic group, we heard a lot of emphasis on youth and teen programs, before and after school care, senior programs, programs for families and keeping programs that support themselves. People want us to stop cutting the budget, but that unfortunately is not a realistic option. The community is ready to step up and help with outreach, volunteering, recruiting advisory council members, and looking for new revenue sources. Suggestions included surveying the community, working more closely with schools, and providing volunteer tutors.

In northeast Seattle, priorities are youth and teens, before and after school programs, senior programs, and programs that are self-sustaining. Participants suggested Parks not provide duplicative programs within a geographic area. Community members are willing to do outreach, volunteer, look for fund sources, and join the advisory councils. Participants suggested partnering with local schools and holding regular combined advisory council meetings within the geographic group.

At the meeting for central community centers, the emphasis is on youth and teens, seniors, before and after school programs, and programs that support themselves. This group also suggested not duplicating programs within the geographic area and trying to avoid staff turnover. The participants expressed willingness to do outreach, look for fund sources, volunteer, join an advisory council and establish partnerships with schools. A unique suggestion from this group is to create a community center foundation to help support community center operations.

In West Seattle, the order of priority is youth and teens, seniors, before and after school programs, and programs that are self-sustaining. This group also suggested avoiding duplication in programming within the geographic area and expressed a willingness to do outreach, use the center more, volunteer, and serve on an advisory council.

Northeast Community Center specific priority highlights:

Northgate Community Center

- Health and wellness programs, culturally diverse programming, community and business partnerships, fund raising activities, additional funding sources through grants, balanced programs for teens, children and adults, marketing, childcare.

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Magnuson Community Center

- Volunteer opportunities, affordable programs, scholarships, partnerships that serve community needs and interests, refine the criteria and definition of tiered Community Centers, safe and engaging programs for youth, donations and outside funding sources.

Meadowbrook Community Center

- Health and fitness programming, summer programs for children and teens, multicultural programs, before and after school care, youth and teen programs, intergenerational activities, partnerships, scholarships, serving all income levels, environmental education.

Ravenna Eckstein Community Center

- Before and after school programs, school partnerships, youth/adult sports programs, intergenerational programs, building community, volunteer involvement, arts programs for preschool and tots, teen and senior programs, drop-in programming, programs.

Laurelhurst Community Center

- Children/youth sports programs, adult health/fitness programs, community partnerships, expand programming, promoting rentals, engage volunteers to assist with Center operations and program promotion, equitable shared hours of the community center, use of technology/marketing to advertise programs.

These trends emerged from the notes across the city:

- A desire to lobby the City Council to restore hours and avoid budget cuts. While this is every citizen's right and very understandable, it unfortunately does not acknowledge the reality in which we find ourselves.
- A desire to vary the programming at the centers within each geographic area so that there are as few duplications as possible.
- A desire to work more closely with local neighborhood schools and PTAs to create partnerships, get information out about programs, and involve more parents.
- A desire to take advantage of "natural" partnerships waiting to happen, e.g., with Neighborhood House at High Point Community Center and between centers and the new ropes challenge course at Camp Long.
- A desire for more outreach using social media, email lists, local blogs, and other tools, while keeping the digital divide in mind and addressing it.

Possibly most heartening of the trends is people's willingness to roll up their sleeves and volunteer in many different areas from helping put on special events to tutoring in areas where volunteers have expertise.

We look forward to the next steps in planning programming and operations in your geographic group, and to implementing your great ideas. To keep up with progress on implementation of the new model, please check in any time at <http://seattle.gov/parks/centers/operations.htm>.

Sincerely,



Christopher Williams